

# Översikter och meddelanden

## The Bantustanisation of Russia

There are no precedents, certainly not in modern times, for the disintegration of a continental, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural empire such as Russia. The collapse of the former Soviet Union brought into sharp focus a multitude of problems that need to be resolved in the Russian dominated lands. To name just a few these include historical injustices, economic disparities and inadequacies of structural arrangements. Consequently it is not surprising that the current political agenda in Russia, has mostly been dominated by residues of its colonial and communist past and the seeking of resolutions to the old problems, rather than a buoyant search for blueprints for the future. The magnitude of problems and issues confronting the post-communist rulers of Russia is colossal. But perhaps one of the most fundamental issues is the survival of Russia as a cohesive political and economic entity. Can Russia survive intact or will it be fragmented into numerous smaller units, the equivalent of South Africa's old 'Bantustans'? The signs are that the processes are set for the 'Bantustanisation' of the once powerful Russian Federation.

This article analyzes the main factors leading to the 'Bantustanization' process as well as the central elements of the Russian version of 'Bantustanization' currently dominating the Federation. It also aims at identifying a set of central assumptions for the continuation of this process. The article concludes that unless there is a fundamental reversal of policies pursued thus far by the central and local elites, 'Bantustanization' is likely to accelerate further with unforeseen consequences for the

Russian Federation, Europe and peace and stability in the post-bipolar world.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet Union officially ceased to exist on 8 December 1991, when the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, unilaterally abrogated the Federation Treaty of 1922 which was the legal basis for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Fifteen sovereign and independent republics emerged out of the Soviet Union. This was the first stage in the disintegration of the bolshevik empire. Its disintegration proceeded along the existing borders and titular majority in different republics.

Thereafter trends were set for the second stage – the disintegration of the former constituent republics. The demands for independence of the so called Transdnestr Republic and the Gagaz Republic fractured the territorial and political cohesion of the Moldovan Republic and set the pattern for future divisions accompanied by civil wars and militarization of a number of areas. The disintegration of Georgia and more recently of Tajikistan followed this route. To this list one can also add Karakalpakia, an autonomous republic on the territory of Uzbekistan, whose Supreme Soviet on 10 April 1993 approved a new constitution under which the autonomy will become a sovereign parliamentary republic within Uzbekistan. The second stage of disintegration is proceeding primarily along ethnic lines without clearly defined or indeed previously acknowledged (identifiable) borders.

The third stage is the disintegration of the Russian Federation. The first autonomous republic within Russia to flex its muscles against the central authorities in Moscow was Checheno-Ingushetia. In November 1991 it declared independence from Russia and since has managed to remain outside the control of the Russian Federation and even secured diplomatic recognition from Lithuania, Esto-

nia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran. The republic refused to sign the Federation Treaty in March 1992. In June 1992 Checheno-Ingushetia, by decision of the Russian parliament, was split into two separate entities Chechnia and Ingushetia, with the latter theoretically becoming part of the Federation. However, Ingushetia has also not signed the Federation Treaty despite several firmly expressed demands from Moscow to do so. It has argued that it may put its signature on the document only after its borders have been finally determined and the territorial dispute with South Ossetia resolved. The prospects of finding a successful resolution to both issues are remote. At the end of July 1993 the Ingush president stated that the inaction of the Russian federal authorities in solving the North Ossetian-Ingush conflict was forcing the Ingush to seek their own way out of the situation. Since the decrees of the Russian president, parliament and government had not been implemented, the Congress of the Peoples of Ingushetia decided on July 31, 1993 not to sign the Federation Treaty and to call for a referendum on Ingushetia's continued membership of the Russian Federation.<sup>2</sup>

During the first half of 1993 the disintegration of Chechnia proceeded further. As a result of intensified conflict between the supporters and opponents of the Dudayev regime, in June 1993 three of the republic's 18 rayons – Nadterechnyy, Urus-Martanouskiy and Guder-messkiy, decided to secede from the republic.

The trend is already clearly detectable for the fourth stage of further disintegration of the federation's components into even smaller entities.

### Ethno-territorial conflicts

Although the Soviet Union was a multi-national state only 67 nations from the 103 recorded in the 1989 census had their own autonomous areas. Lenin as early as 1918 set out the framework for the ethno-territorial division of the Soviet state. According to him there could be no norm which would ensure the right of all ethnic groups to their own autonomous terri-

tories: rather autonomous and ordinary districts should be united for economic purposes in large autonomous regions (*krays*). Consequently, internal divisions of the former USSR were purely administrative; ethnic demarcations seldom corresponded to the ethnic composition of a particular area. Frequent changes in the political-territorial organization were used mainly for the centralized control and direction of the economy and society. The residues of the Leninist policy are still with us today.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1941 and 1957 repeated changes in the national-territorial organization of the USSR were made. In 1941–44 seven peoples accused of collaboration with the German occupiers were deprived of their autonomous status and deported to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The claims of the deported peoples (14 all together) for the restoration of their boundaries of their states now have a legal basis in addition to their historical and moral foundations. In 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation adopted a special resolution on justice for the deported peoples, one of the main points of which envisages the reconstitution of their national-territorial units with the boundaries which existed on the day of their deportation. But how, in practical terms, is it to be implemented and what will be its political consequences? What rights have the titular peoples to their designated territories if their boundaries are legitimised only by Soviet power, which no longer exists?<sup>4</sup>

The past four years have seen the surfacing of a multitude of conflicts and flashpoints in the former Soviet Union. A map prepared by the Office of the Geographer of the US at the beginning of 1990 listed some 40 ethno-territorial conflicts in the Soviet Union. Some 80 conflicts were identified by a Russian academic Valdimir A Kolossov by March 1991. However, by February 1992 Kolossov listed 164 conflicts effecting 70% of the territory of the former Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> Today both publications are already substantially out of date. My own research suggests over 204 ethno-territorial conflicts in the former Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup>

### **Symbiosis of communist collectivism and ethnicity**

The common denominator for potentially the most explosive conflicts is the intertwining between communist collectivism and ethnicity.

One of the most important aspects of the operation of communism was the collective nature of the system. Individual rights (including human, civil and property rights) were subjugated to collective and controlled by the communist party-state. The system not only negated the individual but more importantly used the oppressive apparatus in order to enforce the compliance with collective (party-state) values, structures and procedures. Communist collectivism reinforced group rather than individual identity, but at the same time offered a comfortable net of social and political arrangements. There were few if any choices to be made, the answers were all but supplied, little if any exercise of individual responsibility was required. The persistence of the political culture of collectivism remains one of the main obstacles for effective transformation of communist societies. It is also the main factor in the re-emergence of the ethnic conflicts.

There are both objective and subjective elements in the concept of ethnicity.<sup>7</sup> The objective elements cover characteristics which are actually held in common – perhaps kinship, physical appearance, culture, language, religion etc. (some combination of these characteristics, but not necessarily all, would have to be present in order for a group of people to qualify as an ethnic grouping). The subjective elements rest on the feeling of community. What is important here is the representations which a group has of itself – whether or not those representations are actually correct. The "myth can be potent and it is the group's representations of itself that are important".<sup>8</sup> I should like to stress the importance of the subjective elements. Ethnic groups can only be understood in terms of boundary creation and maintenance. In such cases a common culture is not a defining characteristic of an ethnic grouping; it may in fact come into existence as

a result of a particular grouping asserting its own position. Cultural features are used by ethnic groupings to mark the groupings' boundaries. Similarly, notions of kinship can be projected and/or constructed so as to give greater body to the feelings of commonality within the grouping. The retreat into ethnic socio-political boundaries and values offers protection at turbulent times. In post-communist Russia, as elsewhere in the former communist countries, it has become one of the most poignant socio-political forms of organizations and threats.

These corrosive effects have already had a devastating consequences on the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. There is also ample evidence of subjective ethnicity being asserted by a variety of groups in various parts of the Russian Federation.

### **Tradition of community belonging**

Subjective ethnicity is being reinforced in the Russian lands by the time-honoured tradition of belonging to a local community.

Sprawling over the endless plains of eastern Europe and Siberia, Russia has no natural borders. In so vast a country the main form of social and political organization, and more importantly of defence against the outside world, was the local commune. Communes formed little worlds of their own protecting villages and whole areas from what they considered hostile outsiders.<sup>9</sup>

In the areas of the Tzarist empire that comprise modern Russia communal land-holding was universal. The communal system also underpinned attitudes towards property and law. These were subsequently exaggerated by communism. The attachment to community as a residue of peasant culture is deeply imbedded in the Russian psyche. It still forms the under-current of social, political and economic organizations in remote regions for which Moscow and central authorities are a distant world.

Russia is not a nation state now and never will be. Although the overwhelming majority of the population of the Russian Federation is Russian, it is still a multi-ethnic empire. Some 27 million non-Russians live in the twenty 'sovereign republics' inside Russia with their distinct culture, historical memory, traditions and religions. The Russian nation cannot be identified with the current Russian Federation. Russia thus faces greater ethnic strains than most national states. In addition it should be remembered that Russia has never throughout its history existed within its current borders. Moreover, since the constituent republics had already established their sovereignty the creation of a unitary state or even strong federation in the Russian dominated lands is to all intents and purposes impossible.

#### Consequences of progressive economic decline

The catastrophic position of the Russian economy in continuous decline has had substantial negative consequences on Russia's state sovereignty. The recently published data on the socio-economic situation during the first quarter of 1993 makes grim reading indeed.<sup>10</sup> The 19 per cent fall in industrial production during the first quarter, as compared to the same period of 1992, has been accompanied by 193 per cent inflation rate as compared with December last year. The number of unprofitable enterprises in all sectors of the national economy rose to 21 per cent as compared to 17 per cent last December. The highest proportional share of unprofitable enterprises (between 41–47 per cent) has been registered in the republics of Tuva and Sakha (Yakutia), the Magadan oblast and the Chukotka okrug. By the end of March 1993, one per cent (1,100,000 persons) of the total labour force of Russia had been registered unemployed. Some 38 per cent of the unemployed are young people under 30 years of age. One in every three residents of Russia now receives per capita income below minimum subsistence level.

The 1993 budget envisages spending at R44.7 trillion, while revenues are estimated at R23.3 trillion. The deficit of R22.4 trillion amounts to 25 per cent of the Federation's GDP. However, it should be remembered that the deficit level is estimated at the current level of tax collection. With more and more regions declining to send their taxes to the central authorities the deficit can only increase.

#### Explosion of crime

A dramatic increase in crime since the beginning of the 1990s has become one of the main threats to the state. Endemic corruption from top to bottom involving the former *nomenklatura*, under-paid and demoralized police, security, law enforcement agencies and redundant military personnel as well as well-organized armed mafias have increasingly been destabilizing the functioning of the state and its machinery. According to the information released by the Russian Ministry of the Interior in the middle of 1993 there were at least 150 major mafia syndicates operating in Russia.<sup>11</sup> The number of organized criminal groups was 3,296. They were involved in running the drugs trade, including the local production of synthetic drugs, protection rackets, the theft and distribution of stolen cars (predominantly from the West), hired assassins, prostitution, business etc. Although these groups have no centralized nation-wide structure they wage a permanent war between themselves and with the state authorities for the extension of their spheres of influence.

The sharp increase in crime is best illustrated by comparative figures from 1992 and the first quarter of 1993. Some 371,000 criminals were arrested from January to April 1993, 12% more than in the corresponding period in 1992, of those 120,000 were homeless and 11,000 were unemployed. One in five crimes were classified as serious, and 8,700 involved the use of firearms. Some 37,500 crimes were committed against the individual; there were 77,000 cases of assault and robbery, 520,000 cases of theft of state, public and personal

property, and 41,600 economic crimes. Minors were involved in 68,000 criminal acts, 8% more than in 1992. Group criminal acts numbered 95,000, an increase of 32%. Only 54% of reported crimes were solved.

### Deepening political cleavages

Two years after the August 1991 *coup* which effectively dismantled the USSR and elevated Russia and president Boris Yeltsin as the standard bearers of democratic consensus and progressive change, there is little evidence that consensus is emerging, or that the machinery of consensus is in the making.

The continuous confrontations between the conservative Congress of People's Deputies and its leader Ruslan Khasbulatov, on the one hand, and president Yeltsin and his advisers on the other have assumed very dangerous proportions with devastating consequences for the Federation. The Congress, which according to the current Russian constitution (itself a hangover from the Soviet system), has the supreme legislative powers, has been to all intents and purposes torpedoing attempts to modernize the system. The parliament regularly sends presidential decrees to the Constitutional Court for ruling on their validity, using it as mechanism to undermine executive power and delaying tactic.

The spirit of confrontation also dominates political parties and groups based on individuals and/or small elites, rather than comprehensive political programmes. Russia does not have a working party system. The proto-party system is dominated by politics of confrontation rather than a notion of partnership and wider responsibility for the destiny of the Federation. Both the entire political agenda and political institutions appear to be based on narrowly defined policy issues without a wider national perspective.

To this one should add two economic models currently competing in Russia. One advocates radical reforms, the other harks for the 'good old days' pressing for socially oriented economy under strict state control.

### The decline of presidential authority

There is mounting evidence that president Boris Yeltsin is increasingly losing his ability to rule. The continuous power struggle in the centre and in particular the on-going confrontation between the Russian president on the one hand and the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of the People's Deputies on the other has already had very adverse effects on the regions.

One of the more recent examples comes from the Rostov oblast where the local soviet abolished on 30 April 1993 the post of the representative of the Russian president. The representative and his staff were told to vacate their offices within a week and stop their activities.

A serious conflict between the Supreme Soviet of Mordova and president Boris Yeltsin (and thus the Russian Federation) emerged in April 1993 over the right of the Federation's president to interfere in the republic's power structure. On April 2 the republic's Supreme Soviet voted (by 116 votes to 37) to abolish the post of president and vice-president of the Mordovan Soviet Socialist Republic. The deputies blamed president Vasilij Guslyannikov for current economic hardships and accused him of abusing his position and attempting to create one-man rule. In turn Boris Yeltsin on April 8 issued decree no 4230 "On ensuring the unity of the Russian Federation's executive power on the territory of the Mordovan Republic" which confirmed the powers of Guslyannikov. The decree has been viewed in Mordova as a violation of article 78 of the constitution of the Russian Federation and Article 3 of the Federation Treaty which state that federal power may not intervene in the organization of the republics' power structures. On April 20 Mordova's Supreme Soviet ignoring the presidential decree dismissed the government and created a new Council of Ministers.<sup>12</sup> The dispute was referred to the Russian Constitutional Court which ruled on June 3, 1993 that it was the "internal right of the sovereign Republic of Mordova to decide on the abolition of presidency and vice-presidency."<sup>13</sup>

The Mordovan parliament decision was in accord with the delimitation of powers between the Russian Federation and its constituent republics enshrined in the Russian constitution. The Court also ruled that item one of the Russian president's decree, in which he ordered that Vasily Guslyannikov continue to exercise his powers until the Constitutional Court gave its ruling, did not conform to the Russian Federation's constitution after the law of the Mordovan Republic on abolishing the post of president and vice-president had come into force. Moreover the Court decided that it did not have the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Mordova and that the majority of issues referred to in the appeal should be dealt with by the Constitutional Court of Mordova. The Mordovan parliament's action backed by the Russian Constitutional Court's decision not only fundamentally undermined the authority of the presidency of the Russian Federation but could establish pattern for the abolition of presidency in other republics, including Russia itself. More importantly it could serve as a precedent for the removal of presidential representatives and other federal personnel who become unacceptable to local organs of power.

The growing disenchantment of the regions with the Russian Federation and President Yeltsin's policies were also reflected in the voting figures during the 25 April 1993 referendum.<sup>14</sup> In ten of the 19 republics, Adygeya, Bashkortostan, Altay, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabarda-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Mari-El, Mordova, and Chuvashia, Yeltsin failed to win a vote of confidence from the majority of voters.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that several major oblasts and okrugs voted against the president. In the European part of Russia voters in Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk, Lipetsk, Orel, Penza, Pskov, Ryazan, Saratov, Smolensk, Tambov and Ulyanov oblasts expressed lack of confidence in Yeltsin. Beyond the Urals voters in Altay kray, Amur and Chita oblasts and the Aga-Buryat and Ust-Orda Buryat autonomous okrugs also failed to deliver a vote of confidence.<sup>16</sup>

### Crisis of statehood

The population's confidence in the authority of the state is extremely low. Laws that have been adopted are inoperative. There is increasing evidence of a crisis of authority and a deepening antagonism between the executive and representative bodies.

As a consequence of the Russian Federation's inability to develop its own concept of state formation and bring federal mechanisms into operation, authorities in some of the republics and in krais and oblasts have been quite successful in building up their power structures based on efficient interaction of local sources of power. Against the backdrop of continuous weakening of presidential and federal powers and the increasing turmoil in Moscow, local administrations have become guarantors of stability and formed the nuclei of state formation. There has been increasing evidence that local soviets are slowly paralysing presidential power and breaking down the unity of executive power. Many of Russia's regions by now have elected heads of their administration. The previous heads of administration had been appointed by president Yeltsin. The new heads have become responsible to the local electorate and primarily influenced by local factors and conditions.

The example of Chelyabinsk oblast epitomizes the problems and dilemmas of local and central executive authority. The functions of head of administration were for several weeks discharged simultaneously by two people: Vadim Solovyev, appointed by the president of the Russian Federation, and Petr Sumin, formerly chairman of the local soviet, who was elected head of the administration by the oblast's soviet. The dispute was referred to the Constitutional Court which ruled on June 7, 1993 that the Chelyabinsk oblast soviet decision on the election of the oblast head of administration complied with the Russian Federation constitution.

The legitimacy of local administration is based mainly on local constituencies rather than on central, federal authorities. If they are to survive in their posts they must respond

most of all to local demands for greater economic and political autonomy. The resolution of the local agenda – economic, social, ethnical problems, resettlement of refugees, unemployment, rising crime, border adjustments, etc. – are often at variance with the interests of the federation and its structures. The elected heads of local administration are unlikely to support the federal authorities including the president for long. In many respects we are seeing the repeat of the "Gorbachev delusion" – a man confident that he was running perestroika. While his perestroika operated only in the centre and was executed through presidential decrees, the peripheries and local party bosses strengthened their own powers, developing and slowly putting into operation their own ideas reflecting local needs and aspirations. Regional leaders now perceive that they hold most of the trump cards.

The critical issue is who controls Russia's vast economic resources; Moscow or the regions? Now that the state is divesting itself of assets the vast local resources have become one of the most important battlegrounds for ownership. The quarrels are partly a relic of totalitarian thinking, and partly disputes over the division of property. The struggle is also between two layers of political and economic *nomenklatura* which permeated virtually all structures of the old system and will remain one of the most indestructible human residues of communist times. The regional elites now have a better chance than ever before to lay their hands on wealth once exclusively expropriated by the centre.

In the regions the old connections, personal dependencies and friendships dominate the working of politics and economy. The local elites, as in communist times, still exchange between the most important post in political and industrial management as freely as they did before.

The crisis of statehood is also reflected in the lack of efficient functioning of the central state apparatus. The low level of efficiency in implementing decisions taken by the Russian government and the president is not only due to the obscurity of the central and local ad-

ministrations, but also due to the fact that too many decisions are being taken. During the first seven months of 1993 the government issued 725 resolutions and 1,336 instructions. In addition the Russian Deputy Prime Ministers issued 26,373 orders. Just one Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Shumeiko, issued 3,045 instructions, 172 in June 1993 alone. According to Shumeiko not a single presidential decree or decision taken by the government was being implemented 100 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

### Two competing nationalisms

The menacing spectre of two incompatible versions of nationalism has already had devastating repercussions on Russia. Russian nationalism in krais and oblasts demands the recognition of the special place of Russians within the Federation and the construction of a tight, centralized state structure. On the other extreme is the ethnic nationalism of non-Russians, particularly, but not only, in the twenty 'sovereign republics' demanding increased devolution and recognition of separate economic and political rights. Both have placed incompatible demands on the centre in terms of structural arrangements and policies.

### The inoperability of the federation treaty

The Russian Federation technically consists of 19 or 18 union republics, six krais, fiftyone oblasts, one autonomous oblast and eleven autonomous okrugs. Eighteen of the twenty republics identified in the new Federation Treaty<sup>18</sup> and invited to sign the Treaty did in fact put their signatures on the document on March 31 1992.<sup>19</sup> Tartastan and Checheno-Ingushetia refused to sign it. Subsequently Checheno-Ingushetia split into two separate entities. The Ingush republic created by the decision of the Russian parliament on June 4 1992 refused to sign the document.

The Federation Treaty is a tripartite document. The first Treaty contains definitions and provisions on the division of subjects and

powers (authorities) between federal authorities of the Russian Federation and the authorities of the sovereign republics within the Russian Federation. The second Treaty incorporates stipulations on the division of subjects and powers between the federal authorities of the Russian Federation and the authorities of *krays*, *oblasts* and the cities of Moscow and St Petersburg of the Russian Federation. The third Treaty contains provisions on the division of subjects and powers between the federal authorities of the Russian Federation and the authorities of the autonomous *oblasts* and autonomous *okrugs* of the Russian Federation.

The Federation Treaty, at least theoretically, allows for each of the republics, *krays*, *oblasts* and *okrugs* to become a fully-fledged "subject of the Federation" with its own constitution, president, parliament, control over taxation, natural resources and economy. Moreover it offered, at least in principle, the opportunities to conclude additional agreements on the reallocation and mutual delegation of powers. More than a year after its signing hardly any of the Treaty's provisions have been implemented.<sup>20</sup> The proclamation of norms has not been followed by appropriate additional legal provisions which would enable the exercise of rights granted in the Treaty. According to the Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet, Ramazan Abdulatipov, a majority of the subjects of the federation are dissatisfied with the way the treaty is being executed.

Since the signing of the Treaty the subjects of the federation have been increasingly demanding not only equal economic but also political rights for all its components. It should be pointed out, however, that the argument of full economic and political equality among the subjects of the federation contains a major contradiction. If all parts of the federation have the same political rights there is no question of a federation.

The central and most contentious issue is what is the status of the components of the federation and consequently what are the rights and obligations of the union republics

*vis-a-vis* the federation and similarly the rights of *krays*, *oblasts* and *okrugs vis-a-vis* the republics and the federation. The Treaty appears to hold the prospect for all the 87 subjects of the federation to be given the rights and status of union republics. Many of the *krays* and *oblasts* and several autonomous *okrugs* have been demanding political and economic rights equal to those of the republics. However, neither the federal nor the republican authorities are willing to acquiesce to these demands, increasingly fearing the loss of economic and political control and that demands for a greater degree of political independence will follow. After a year of confusion over the precise rights and obligations of the subjects of the federation, president Yeltsin has only recently indicated his opposition to *krays* and *oblasts* acquiring the constitutional right to issue their own laws.<sup>21</sup> He also spoke against the equality of all the subjects of the federation in political rights. His pronouncements not only contradict the spirit of the Federation Treaty but in many cases are too late since many of the subjects of federation have already adopted a variety of their own legal provisions which they see as in their competence. In the absence of any effective execution of the Treaty's provisions, the republics and regions want to replace the federal authority, a demand which is fiercely opposed by the centre. The lack of clear demarcation of powers between the centre and the regions is contributing to the weakening of state authority and the integrity of the federation. For as long as the shape of the new federal structure and the prerogatives of its constituent parts remain unclear, problems of constitutional authority and delineation of prerogatives will, more likely than not, lead to series of increasing conflicts.<sup>22</sup>

The republics of Bashkortostan, Tartastan, Karelia and Yakutia (Sakha) have demanded the exclusive rights to levy taxes and to launch their own currencies. Tartastan and Yakutia (Sakha) had drafted their own constitutions. That of Tartastan ignored the existence of the Russian Federation while the Yakut version allotted only defence and boundary protection to the federal level. There are numerous claims



for the partition of 'double republics'. Given the incredibly complex pattern of ethnic distributions, no national and/or linguistic boundary can be wholly satisfactory to all parties. Thus for example the Yakuts refer to the boundary of Yakutia in the early nineteenth century, Tartastan to that before 1552. They also expressed concern for their 'blood brothers' living abroad', claiming the right to annex their settlement areas or at least to establish autonomous territories for them.<sup>23</sup>

On April 30 1993 Kalmykia became a presidential republic within the Russian Federation when deputies voted by overwhelming majority to dissolve the Supreme Soviet and replace it with a 25-member 'professional' parliament. They also abolished the local soviets throughout the country. The decision followed the election, on April 11, of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, a 30-year-old multi-millionaire as president of the republic. Subsequently Ilyumzhinov imposed direct rule through the system of personal representatives in whom he vested special powers. The new president has emphasized the need for economic autonomy from Russia. It is, however, hard to imagine that such an autonomy can be achieved without the loosening and eventual severance of federal links with Russia.

The Tuva Supreme Soviet on 11 May 1993 defied the Russian Federation and amended the republican constitution to include the right to self-determination and the right to secede from Russia.<sup>24</sup> The chairman of the republic's parliament argued in July 1993 that if the federal authorities "continued treating the country's constituent parts the way they did thus far, Tuva might use its constitutional right to secede".<sup>25</sup> Nationalists in the republic have long argued that Tuva's incorporation into the Soviet Union was no more legal than that of the Baltic states. Given that two-thirds of the population is Tuvan, secession has become an achievable option.

Bashkortostan has been in serious dispute with the Russian Federation for over eighteen months now. In the spring of 1992 the republic's Supreme Soviet asked the Russian leadership for 30 per cent of Bashkortostan's

industrial output to remain in the republic. The Republic signed, albeit with serious reservations, the Federation Treaty establishing the Russian Federation. Bashkortostan insisted that a special appendix should be added to the treaty. In it the republic proclaimed land minerals, natural and other resources (including oil of which Bashkortostan is a major producer) on its territory to be the property of its population and not that of the Federation. It declared that issues related to the utilization of its resources will be regulated by Bashkir law and agreements with federal government. The republic has also proclaimed itself an "independent participant in international law and foreign economic relations, except in areas it has voluntarily delegated to the Russian Federation". In April 1993 Bashkortostan's parliament approved a question to be put to a republic-wide referendum: "Do you agree that the Republic of Bashkortostan must have economic independence and treaty-based relations with the Russian Federation and Appendix to it, in the interests of all the peoples of the Republic of Bashkortostan?" The wording of the question predetermines the outcome of the voting – few if any of the voters in the republic are likely to object to greater economic independence. In practice it means the freedom to export its products and maintain its own tax system whereby Bashkortostan remits fixed payments to the Russian Federation budget keeping the rest for itself. In this Bashkortostan is following a precedent established by Russia itself. The financial noose that destroyed the Soviet Union began to tighten in the autumn of 1991 when Yeltsin refused to hand Russia's taxes to Gorbachev. What is, however, more significant is that the republic's authorities intend to place any agreement with Russia on "treaty-based relations" – an inter-state level. By asserting at the referendum the need for treaty-based relations the Bashkir authorities have brought pressure on Moscow to admit that Bashkortostan has a special status within the federation. That precedent can be now followed by any of the federation's units.

Tatarstan declared its sovereignty on 30 August 1990. On 21 February 1992 the parliament of Tartastan decided to hold a referendum on the status of the republic. Four million voters were asked to reply to the following question: "Do you agree that the Republic of Tartastan is a sovereign state, a subject of international law, building its relations with the Russian Federation and other republics (states) on the basis of fair treaties?" The referendum took place on March 21 1992 despite the ruling of Russia's Constitutional Court that it was unlawful. The results of the referendum confirmed the earlier decision on the declaration of sovereignty of the Tatar state. In November 1992 the parliament of Tartastan adopted a new constitution which clearly defined the powers, sovereignty and independence of the republic. At the same time the deputies insisted on an association membership for Tartastan in the Russian Federation, something that is not envisaged by the stipulations of the Federation Treaty. After the adoption of the constitution Moscow faced a dilemma of whether to sign a treaty with Tartastan as an equal partner, thus creating a political precedence, or to treat the republic as an integral part of Russia which Tartastan refused to acknowledge. The consequences of the second option can have far reaching economic military and political repercussions.

The nationalist and secessionist movement in Tartastan continues to grow in strength. Eleven social organizations and movements in the republic advocate the complete independence of Tartastan. In an appeal issued on April 13, 1993 they called for boycott of the all-Russia referendum on April 25. They argued that Tartastan was never voluntarily a part of Russia and the peoples of Tartastan have no need of the referendum into which imperial forces want to drag them.<sup>26</sup> On May 11, 1993, in pursuance of its independent foreign and economic policy, Tartastan signed an economic cooperation agreement with Hungary for 1993-98, during president Mintimer Shaimiiev's visit to Budapest. Under the agreement Tartastan will deliver 1.5 million tons of crude oil annually and Hungary will

export industrial and agricultural products to the Tartar Republic. It was the first such agreement negotiated between Tartastan and a foreign country. In 1992 trade turnover between the two countries exceeded US\$235 million. Russia moved closer to acknowledging the independence of Tartastan when after a meeting between the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai and Tartastan Deputy Prime Minister Vasilii Likhachev on June 3, 1993, it was announced that they had "worked out the definitions of some economic inter-governmental agreements that create the basis for a future bilateral treaty".<sup>27</sup> On June 5 the prime ministers of both countries signed a number of agreements including an agreement on the sale and transportation of oil, refining petroleum products and an agreement on higher education.<sup>28</sup>

The Tuymen region, rich in oil and natural gas, which refused to sign the Federation Treaty in March 1992 is now threatened with the secession of two of its autonomous okrugs: Khanty-Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets which want to acquire the status of separate republics. Secession of the two okrugs would reduce the area of the Tuymen region from 1.4 million sq.km. to mere 161.000 sq. km. and deprive it of much of its resources and industry.

The division of the Magadan oblast and the creation of the Chukot republic became a reality when on May 11 1993 the Constitution Court of the Russian Federation decided that the separation of the Chukchee autonomous okrug from the Magadan oblast was in accordance with the Russian constitution. The Chukchee in 1989 accounted for only 7.3% of the okrug's population while Russians and Ukrainians made up 83%. In September 1990 the okrug's soviet proclaimed itself an autonomous republic and in March 1991 decided to separate from the oblast. Magadan's authorities contended that such a decision could be taken after a referendum was held. The Court's decision open the way for secession of numerous other okrugs throughout the Russian Federation.

The Vologda region is an interesting example of another version of disintegrative

processes within the Russian Federation. Vologda's 1.3 million inhabitants are almost 100 per cent Russian. In the all-Russia referendum on April 25 1993 the region's authorities added an additional fifth question. It read: "Do the citizens of Vologda want to become a sovereign subject of the Russian Federation?"<sup>29</sup> In a turn-out of 61% some 88% voted "yes". The result gave the authorities in Vologda a mandate to demand the status and prerogatives of a union republic. On May 14, 1993 Vologda declared itself a republic.

The strength of feeling, widespread in Russia's provinces, largely stems from local perception that the federal government is weak, divided, inefficient and a drain on the province's resources,<sup>30</sup> and that the populous and industrially developed regions have not been getting a fair deal from the central government which has been taxing them heavily only to subsidize the ethnic republics.

#### **The failure of the constitutional conference**

The increasingly deep and bitter political polarization of Russia, coupled with structural and legal vacuum, prompted president Yeltsin and his supporters to convey the Constitutional Conference on June 5, 1993. The president also wanted to utilize the momentum gained during the April 25, 1993, all-Russia referendum, in which he received an unexpectedly high level of support for his economic reform programme. The aim of the conference, which was to last ten days, was to produce a final draft of the Russian constitution and thus provide the legal formula for the structure and functioning of the Russian Federation.

The proceedings of the conference, which dragged on for over six weeks, were dominated by often acrimonious debates over the status, rights and prerogatives of the subjects of the federation – republics, krais, oblasts and okrugs. While the republics wanted to secure privileged positions within the structure federation and exclude other components of

the federation from obtaining similar political and economic rights, the krais and oblasts demanded the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the republics. They maintained that only equal status with the republics would give them the necessary authority to guarantee sufficient economic and political rights in order to secure the interests of their inhabitants. However, the unspoken agenda included the increasing evident conflicts and competition between regional and central elites. Both elites have successively attempted to secure the exclusive and contradictory objectives – access to the recently acquired economic and political privileges for themselves and their constituencies. The struggle for the demarcation of spheres of influence and associated claims for economic resources formed an vital part of the wrangling and transaction process.

The conference remained deadlocked over the issue of equality between the republics and regions for several weeks. The formula that eventually emerged fell far short of meeting the regions demands. The draft gave the republics the status, attributes and prerogatives of sovereign states while other component parts of the federation are ranked only as state-territorial formations.

Thus what prevailed was the national/ethnic approach enshrined by the bolsheviks in 1918 and put into operation in the Union Treaty of 1922, rather than a new approach to Russia's federal structure anchored in the province-based division of the country and demanded by the regions. The sovereignty versus state-territorial formations formula allowed the ethnically based republics, where in virtually all cases the titular population forms a minority, to claim political and more importantly economic privileges over other subjects of the federation. However it alienated the regions determined to secure as much power and control of their financial resources from Moscow as possible. The agreed text of the new draft did not define what a "subject of the federation" is or what political and economic rights such subject possesses.

The Constitutional Conference rather than consolidating the federation had in fact accel-

erated its disintegration. The ethnic republic's insistence on an exclusively constitutionally based attestation of their position, provoked the predominantly Russian-inhabited regions to demand republican status. In order to get the support from the regions, resentful of paying higher taxes to subsidize generally poorer but more privileged republics, president Yeltsin promised to level the economic status of all territories. This proved not enough to halt a chain reaction of regions unilaterally upgrading their status. Subsequently many of the krais and oblasts either declared themselves republics or began the process of claiming such status.

The regional soviet of the Sverdlovsk oblast, one of Russia's largest industrial centres proclaimed the economically influential area the Ural Republic within the Russian Federation on July 1, 1993.<sup>31</sup> The declaration of the republic followed a referendum on Apr. 25, 1993 in which the population voted in favour of republican status.<sup>32</sup> The political purpose of the decision was to create a powerful counterweight to the national republics. The local soviet declared that the Ural Republic would have a constitution, a council of ministers and parliament and would "independently resolve issues of its day-to-day life and perform legislative, executive and judicial functions within the scope of its jurisdiction". It invited the five other oblasts in the Urals region to join the new republic. The Sverdlovsk soviet also proclaimed the territory "an integral and inalienable part of the Russian Federation", whose borders could not be changed. "It is our firm conviction" – explained Sverdlovsk's governor, Eduard Rossel – "that all components of the federation must have equal political, economic and norm-setting rights and the principle of the division of the country must be territorial". The republic's authorities demanded that they should be allowed to keep most of its revenues. The head of the oblast's administration threatened to withhold its contributions towards the federal budget unless the republic was recognized by Moscow. In a move intended to side-step president Yeltsin and his Constitutional Conference, Sverdlovsk de-

clared to ask the next session of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies to approve the republic's draft constitution and its new status.

The creation of the Ural Republic clearly constituted a sequel to the Constitutional Conference and by bringing the conflicts between regions within the Russian Federation out into the open was a serious blow to Russia's constitutional reforms. In proclaiming the Ural Republic the leaders of the Sverdlovsk oblast showed that the localities and regions of Russia are not prepared to accept the existence of privileged components of the Federation like the national republics. Sverdlovsk's case demonstrates the almost insurmountable problems and dilemmas faced by the majority of Russia's regions. According to Eduard Rossel, "since the signing of the Federation Treaty, acute problems have arisen and major contradictions have emerged in the development of the Russian state and law".<sup>33</sup> During 1992 the region actively supported the market reforms and achieved a high pace of privatization. However, by the end of that year its rate of production declined substantially. The oblast found that its vast potential could not be utilized because it was "shackled by outmoded instructions and decrees from Moscow". At the same time while the concern for the prosperity of the population was "fully placed on the shoulders of the local authorities, their rights have remained the same, based on the prerogatives of an oblast status". Thus winning political and economic rights meant also acquiring the prerogative to ignore dated federal legislation and the ability to pursue economic and political reforms necessitated by local requirements. The declaration of the Ural Republic caused a chain reaction in other regions.

The Maritime Territory, rich in natural resources, declared itself the Maritime Republic on June 8, 1993.<sup>34</sup> At the same time the local soviet spelled out conditions for initialling the draft of the Russian constitution. These included the stipulation that the constitution contains provisions that all constituent parts of the Federation will enjoy equal rights and that

its constituent parts will have no rights to cede from Russia.

On July 9 Chelyabinsk oblast declared itself the South Urals Republic. Justifying this decision the local soviet claimed that the Constitutional Conference had failed to take into account the region's demands to grant equal rights to the constituent parts of the Federation. The decision on republican status was made in order to "effect the economic and social development of the oblast as an independent constituent entity of the Russian Federation".<sup>35</sup> Moreover the local soviet, following the example of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, demanded that future relations with the Federation are to be build on the basis of a special treaty.

The soviet of the southern Siberian oblast of Amur proclaimed the region the Amur Republic on July 21, 1993.

The soviet of Chita oblast decided in July 1993 to hold a referendum to determine whether the local population would like the region to become a republic.

Initial steps in the process of republicanization have also been taken by Krasnoyarsk and Tomsk oblasts. Tomsk with a budget deficit of R40 billion in July, suspended its tax contributions to the Federation and has called a referendum on republican status for October 3, 1993.

Kaliningrad oblast which, because of its curious geographical position is Russian territory no longer physically linked with Russia, already has a peculiar geo-political position. On July 10 the local soviet demanded special status within the Federation and greater control over its affairs. It insisted on an effective right to control its borders, the right to regulate migration, exit and entry from the enclave and duration of stay in the region both by Russian citizens and foreign nationals. It also demanded increased federal subsidies to offset the high cost of living in the region. At the same time it requested that the oblast's special status would have to be specifically enshrined in the new Russian constitution.

Leningrad oblast warned the federal authorities on July 20, 1993 that unless they took

measures to ensure the stabilization of the economic situation in the region it would examine the question of changing the oblast's status. It complained that since the burden of reform currently being implemented has been shifted to regional level and prices for energy carriers have been deregulated, the oblast's economy is close to collapse. One in three industrial enterprises is on the brink of bankruptcy. It has demanded subsidies of R26.4 billion to support its budget deficit.

### Conclusions

The process of the disintegration of Russia discussed in this article has led, to all intents and purposes, to the creation of several separate 'homelands' or 'Bantustans' established by the local population on their territories in defence of their economic and political interests. This process will, in my view, have far reaching consequences and implications for international politics of in particular the European states, the United States, the European Community, and the Western European institutions as the principal actors in the construction of the new world post-communist order. Policy implications of the 'Bantustanization', because of the lack of space, could not be discussed in the article. These will be analyzed in a separate study.

To summarize; the gist of my argument contained in this article is based on two broad assumptions: firstly, that the residues of communism will remain for a long time to come. It has proved relatively easy to achieve structural transformation in the former Soviet Union in order to achieve the edifices of liberal democracy. However, their functioning is more often than not at variance with liberal democratic principles and values. These would be able to take roots only with generational change. In strategic terms the symbiotic relationship between communist collectivism and ethnicity will dominate the wider political agenda. It is the most difficult aspect to tackle because it reflects the basic and in some sense perhaps irrational, feelings of indi-

vidual and group insecurity. At the same time however, in political and strategic terms it has become the avenue for the expression of political, economic and social aspirations which have been denied thus far. The substantial credibility gap which exists between the old structural, i.e. federal, arrangements and the demands of an essentially new post-communist situation can only be bridged by either the dismantling of the old structure or through their fundamental modification. Thus far there has been little, if any, evidence of either. Russia still wants to remain a federation rather than for example a confederation, commonwealth or community of nations. The old Czarist slogan "Russia is indivisible" is used as a rallying point by the new democrats and the old communists alike. The new Federation Treaty in one important respect is even more reactionary than the 1922 Union Treaty which contained at least a token provision for secession from the union. The new Treaty does not. According to it the territory of the Federation is integral and inalienable. The spectre of the disintegration of Russia is indeed threatening but it is a progressive reality. The way this reality is dealt with in the long term will determine the stability of international relations.

The second assumption of my main argument is that there are two incompatible processes taking place in Western Europe on the one hand and the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe on the other. For four decades now the Western European agenda has been dominated by integration in political, economic and strategic terms. This has been a long and arduous process based firstly on clear identification of separate interests and secondly on the development of common strategies and goals. The East is now only at the stage of identifying separate interests. Integration may follow in due course but if it is forced or artificially accelerated it will inevitably be full of cracks and consequent instabilities.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps one of the most important lessons to be learned from the historical experience of the former Soviet Union, and from the tragic events in Yugoslavia, is that the federal organ-

ization of the state and the multinational structure of its population are quite different things. There is an urgent need to re-examine our well accepted analytical and methodological tools such as the concept of the nation state, sovereignty, self-determination, nation and borders.

Bogdan Szajkowski

#### Notes

1. In writing this article I have drawn on my paper "Will Russia disintegrate into Bantustans", *The World Today*. vol. 49, nos 8-9 (August-September), 1993. pp. 172-176.
2. RFE/RL Daily Report, 29 and 31 July 1993.
3. Vladimir A Kolosov. *Ethno-Territorial Conflicts and Boundaries in the Former Soviet Union*. International Boundaries Research Unit, University of Durham, 1992. p. 10.
4. *Ibid.* p. 12.
5. *Ibid.* p. 11.
6. Bogdan Szajkowski. *Encyclopedia of Conflicts and Flashpoints in the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe*. London, Longman (to appear in December 1993).
7. Bogdan Szajkowski and Tim Niblock. "Islam and Ethnicity in Eastern Europe". Paper presented to International Conference on Muslim Minorities/Communities in Post-bipolar Europe" at the Saints Cyril and Metodij University, Skopje, Macedonia. April 1993. pp. 2-3.
8. Ben-Rafael, Eliezer and Sharot, Stephen. *Ethnicity, Religion and Class in Israeli Society*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991. p. 6.
9. The Russian word for commune 'mir' also means both 'world' and 'peace'.
10. For details see: "The socio-economic situation and the development of economic reforms in the Russian Federation in the first quarter of 1993". *Economica i Zhizn*. no 17. May 1993.
11. BBC SWB, SU/1743 B/3. 17 July 1993, and BBC SWB, SU/1749 B/1. 24 July 1993.
12. BBC SWB, SU/1676 B/5. 30 April 1993.
13. BBC SWB, SU/1712 B/14. 11 June 1993.
14. Of the 107,3 million eligible voters in the Russian Federation, 69.2 million participated in the referendum. The referendum contained four ques-

tions. The first two were considered by the Russian Constitutional Court to be polls of public opinion only and, therefore not binding. The figures for the first two questions represent the percentage of those who voted. Answering the first question which read: "Do you trust President of the Russian Federation B N Yeltsin?", 58.7% replied "yes" and 39.2% replied "no". To the second question "Do you approve the socio-economic policy that has been pursued by the President of the Russian Federation and Government of the Russian Federation since 1992?", 53% voted "yes" and 44.6% replied "no". The two final questions were ruled by the Court to be binding and, therefore, requiring the votes of a majority of all eligible voters in order to be ratified. The figures that follow measure the vote with respect to all eligible voters. To the third question "Do you regard as necessary the holding of the early elections of President of the Russian Federation?", 31.7% voted "yes" and 30.2% voted "no". To the fourth question "Do you regard as necessary the holding of the early elections of the People's Deputies of the Russian Federation?", 43.1% replied "yes" and 19.3% "no". The last two questions were not passed since they attracted under half of the potential votes. (Communique by the Central Commission for the Nationwide Referendum, 5 May 1993).

15. In response to the question "Do you trust President of the Russian Federation B N Yeltsin?", only 2.7% of voters in Ingushetia, 14.3% in Dagestan, 25.9% in Karachay-Cherkessia, 35.8% in Kabarda-Balkaria, 37.6% in Chuvashia, 39% in Mordovia, 39.6% in Bashkortostan, 42.6% in Kursk, 43% in Altai and 43% in Amur, voted "yes". BBC SWB, SU/1675 B/2. 29 April 1993 and BBC SWB, SU/1680 B/3. 5 May 1993.

16. BBC SWB, SU/1675 B/2. 29 April 1993. Interestingly the referendum also showed a considerable dissatisfaction with Yeltsin and his policies among the Russians living outside the Russian Federation. For example of those eligible Russian citizens residing in Estonia, only 27.9% of those voting expressed confidence in the president, with 71.3% voting against: 72.6% rejected the reforms, some 70.3% supported early presidential elections, with 28.3% against, and 50.3% backed early parliamentary elections with 48.7% against. Of the 4,525 Russian citizens in Latvia who participated in the referendum 21% voted 'yes' and 78% 'no' on the question of confidence in the president; 19.5% voted 'yes' and

80% 'no' support of reform policy; 79% voted 'yes' and 19% 'no' on presidential elections; and 40% voted 'yes' and 59% 'no' on the question of fresh elections to the Russian parliament. (BBC SWB, SU/1674 C/5. 28 April 1993).

17. BBC SWB, SU/1761 B/2. 7 August 1993. Further data given by the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, in June 1993 on the fulfilment of presidential and government decrees and orders revealed that 160 tasks remained unfulfilled. These included, 28 tasks contained in presidential decrees and orders, 90 tasks envisaged in the Council of Ministers resolutions and orders and 42 tasks from the Prime Minister. The largest number of tasks were unfulfilled by the Ministry of Finance (24), the Ministry of Economics (15) and the State Committee for the Management of State Property (15). (ITAR-TASS, 1 July, 1993).

18. The Federation Treaty replaced the Union Treaty of 29 December, 1922 which was abrogated by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine on December 8 1991 when the three countries created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

19. The Treaty was signed by the Russian Federation, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Adygeya, the Republic of Bashkortostan, the Buryat Soviet Socialist Republic, the Republic of Gornyy Altay, the Republic of Dagestan, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Republic of Kalmykia-Khalmg Tangch, the Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia, the Republic of Karelia, the Komi Soviet Socialist Republic, the Republic of Mari El, the Mordovia Soviet Socialist Republic, the North Ossetian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Republic of Sakha (Yukutia), the Republic of Tuva, the Udmurt Republic, the Republic of Khakassia, and the Chuvash Republic.

20. See for example an interview with the Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet, Ramazan Abdulatipov, BBC SWB, SU/1656 B/5. 6 April 1993.

21. See Yeltsin's address to the Council of Heads of Administration of Krays, Oblasts and Autonomous Okrugs within Russia on 28 May, 1993. BBC SWB, SU/1701 B/1. 29 May 1993.

22. Serious disagreements concerning the equality of the subjects of the federation and its territorial and state structure dominated the Constitutional Conference which began in Moscow on June 5, 1993. One of the working groups comprising representatives of the republics, krays, oblasts and

autonomous formations proposed that the subjects of the federation "are equal in relations to the federal bodies of power". They also adopted clauses stating that a republic is a sovereign state within the federation, while a kray, oblast, a city of federal importance, an autonomous oblast or an autonomous okrug are state formations. Republics could establish their own citizenship, while citizens of the federation would have the same rights of the republic they live in. (BBC SWB, SU/1715 B/1. 15 June 1993).

23. Even in Kazakhstan, with its extremely mixed population and relative tolerance, the legislator wish to extend citizenship to all Kazakhs living 'abroad'.

24. Tuva enjoyed at least nominal independence between August 12, 1921 and October 11, 1944 when it was incorporated into the USSR.

25. Interfax, 9 July 1993.

26. *Izvestia*, 13 April, 1993.

27. BBC SWB, SU/1712 B/15. 11 June 1993.

28. *ibid*

29. Authorities of eleven other oblasts put forward similar questions to their voters. In St Petersburg 80% of the voters voted in favour of the city being given the status equivalent to an autonomous republic.

30. David Hearst. "City with an appetite for shocking the Moscow despot". *The Guardian*. 15 June 1993.

31. For background to the proclamation see: Aleksandr Pashkov, "Escalation of dispute among components of the federation: Ural Republic proclaimed". *Izvestia*, 3 July 1993.

32. The plebiscite was held in conjunction with the all-Russia referendum. In addition to the four questions proposed by president Yeltsin, voters in Sverdlovsk were asked if the oblast should become a republic. Overwhelming majority voted in favour.

33. *Izvestia*, 3 July 1993.

34. The decision is to be confirmed by a referendum held in the territory in the autumn of 1993.

35. ITAR-TASS, 9 July 1993.

36. There have been only sporadic and very limited signs of regional cooperation on selected issues between some of the subjects of the Federation. For instance in July 1993 Nizhniy Novgorod oblast and the Republic of Mari-El began discussing a united economic policy in the Volga region and established a united statistical system.

## Wenn jemand eine Reise tut, so kann er was erzählen<sup>1</sup> – Några nutida svenska politikers minnen

Människolivet ger tillfällen till tillbakablick och reflektion: Vad gjorde jag? Var det värt priset? Betydde det något för någon annan?

Inom litteraturvetenskapen finns en välutvecklad diskussion om, främst, biografins plats och relevans. I vilja till nytänkande introducerades under 1960- och 70-talen analysinriktningar vi känner också från statsvetenskapen: fenomenologi, hermeneutik, strukturalism etc. I fokus stod förklaringsmodeller av social och strukturell art. Pendeln har nu åter

börjat svänga, och människan återges sin plats i livet. Att knyta samman liv och verk "... gör litteraturen betydelsefull på ett sätt som inte kräver en i hög grad specialiserad vetenskaplig eller språkfilosofisk kompetens av den vanliga läsaren, utan helt enkelt en viss inlevelseförmåga och livserfarenhet." (Wrede 1989, 13)

Tankar kring en social biografi har utformats inom sociologin. Den vill berätta om en okänd, maktlös människas livsförlopp, vägen och målet; livscykeln (Bernler & Bjerkman 1990).

Under det sista decenniet har ledande svenska politiker givit ut sina minnen, i olika former. Finns där ett specifikt bidrag som självbiografien tillför vår kunskap om politiken? Hur skulle en vidare diskussion se ut vad gäller